

# The Cary Arboretum



of The New York Botanical Garden

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## SPECIAL HORTICULTURE ISSUE

### Taylor Lilacs to Bloom at Cary

The Howard Taylor Memorial Lilac Arboretum, a 20-year Millbrook tradition and one of the finer lilac collections in the country, is in the process of being moved plant by plant to the Cary Arboretum and, it is predicted, will attract thousands of visitors annually.

Donated to the Arboretum by the family of the late Howard Taylor, the extensive collection represents nearly 100 French hybrid lilac varieties, including many of the finest types developed by nurseries in France and in the U.S. during the first half of this century.

In early May nearly 100 of the 250 donated plants were transferred to the grounds of the Gifford House Education Center. They are fully mature specimens ranging between 10 and 15 feet in height, and of immediate landscape impact. Moving them has presented a unique challenge to the horticulture staff, made possible only because of the availability of a large digging machine rented from the Van Alstine Company near Albany. This machine has the capability to lift plants out of the ground with an intact root ball 76 inches

wide and 4 feet deep. Transported with that much soil, the lilacs "hardly know they have been moved," says Arboretum horticulturist Bob Hebb. The machine also conveyed them over the 4 miles of road between the Taylor property and the Arboretum to holes specially prepared in advance. The unusual sight of 20 plants a day travelling along Routes 44 and 44A was seen and commented upon by many area residents.

Mr. Hebb is designing the new planting to have maximum landscape impact at the Gifford House grounds. The lilacs will form a double allée, similar in effect to their original configuration on the Taylor property, but, in the Cary setting, with a wide gravel walk between. "What I visualize," reports Mr. Hebb, "is a panorama of lilacs stretching from the parking area entrance in a broad arc all the way to the Carriage House. My dream is that one day the lilacs will be underplanted with masses of daylilies to form a low maintenance groundcover and to provide continuing summer bloom. The lilacs and day-

*Continued on page 3*

### Two Years of Planning Brings *Davidia* to Rhododendron Dell

*Davidia involucrata*, a newcomer to the Arboretum's Rhododendron Dell, will surely steal the show this spring when its lovely 6½-inch white flower bracts give visitors a unique sight to behold in late May (see related article, this issue).

The recent acquisition is a result of the generosity of Mrs. Anne Strain, a Poughkeepsie resident and Cary Member whose interest in the Arboretum and its developing Rhododendron Dell led to the donation of the *Davidia*, or dove tree.

"I didn't realize it was an unusual tree for this area," recalls Mrs. Strain. "I read about its fascinating history, admired it in nursery catalogs, and decided to order one."

Mrs. Strain planted the dove tree as a "whip" in 1967. When she met Arboretum horticulturist Bob Hebb several years later, she inquired about its inability to bloom. "His reply was 'Twenty feet or twenty years, whichever comes first,'" she recalls. Luckily, the tree's growth was exceptional, and at 14 years old it bloomed for the first time in 1981.

Preparatory work to move the 30-foot *Davidia* from its Poughkeepsie home 15 miles northeast of the Arboretum began two years ago. Extensive root pruning was necessary in order to form a workable root ball that would eventually be wrapped in burlap and tied securely for transport. This was accomplished during the spring of 1981 and 1982 when 36-inch deep trenches were dug around the perimeter of the tree in order to reach and trim outlying roots and to encourage vigorous new root growth within the eight-foot ball.

The *Davidia*'s move from Poughkeepsie in early March was made possible by a winch truck owned by Frank Fenelle of Millbrook, who donated both the needed equipment

*Continued on page 3*

### Generous Gift Endows Rose Garden

The Arboretum's Gifford Garden will be the site of a beautiful and unusual rose collection, thanks to the generosity of an Arboretum Friend and neighbor.

Mr. Leonard I. Shankman, a Millbrook resident and a member of the Arboretum and its Advisory Committee, and an enthusiastic grower of roses, has recently made a substantial gift as an endowment to support in perpetuity the establishment and maintenance of a superb rose display.

Named the Shankman Rose Collection, this special part of the Gifford Garden will feature a carefully chosen selection of hybrid tea, polyantha species and old shrub roses. Designed to tell the fascinating history of this valuable genus, the collection will also show visitors the best varieties to plant in our

area. Although the popular hybrid tea roses need special winter protection in our climate, numerous tubbed specimens trained on single stems to a tree like or "standard" habit will be displayed and moved annually to the protection of the Arboretum's cold storage building at the onset of cold weather.

"We are very grateful to Mr. Shankman for this gift," said Arboretum Director Dr. Willard Payne. "This is the first endowment fund to provide a permanent financial base for any of our public programs. Mr. Shankman's generosity will allow us to better serve our many visitors, will complement the beauty and teaching value of the perennial collection, and provides a benchmark in the Arboretum's history that will be useful for many years to come."



# Director's Notes: Generous Optimism

by Dr. Willard Payne

In this issue of the Newsletter, we are fortunate to be able to describe a number of gifts of plants and support that have made possible development of the public display and educational plantings on the grounds. The impacts of such gifts affect us in very positive ways, and I want to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Arboretum, my very great gratitude to these many generous and beneficent donors.

Meeting the needs of the public for enjoyment and plant information was a primary concern from our founding. We began immediately to plan the gardens and collections that today meet a broad range of needs of students and visitors. The first significant donation in 1972 was from the Detmer Family and Estate, Tarrytown, New York, who gave us the striking umbrella pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*) located behind the parking lot at the Fern Glen; the wonderful white limber pines (*Pinus flexilis* 'Glaucua') in the meadow on Fowler Road near the entrance to the Cary Forest Drive; several of the large *Enkianthus* that dominate the shrub plantings around the entrance of the Plant Science Building, and the large weeping white pine (*Pinus strobus* 'Pendula') which is spectacular near the entrance to the greenhouse on NY Route 82.

In 1975, the original umbrella pine was augmented by two additional large specimens given by Mr. Robert Quinlin of Millerton, New York, and moved to the grounds by the firm of Frost and Higgins. Shortly thereafter, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen W. Blodgett of Garrison, New York, donated the exquisite weeping hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis* 'Pendula', that adds to our evergreen conifer display in the

Plant Science Building parking area. It is a special pleasure to see this progression of valuable tree and shrub donations continued by the magnificent 30-foot specimen, described in this issue, of the very rare and beautiful dove tree, *Davidia involucrata*, by Mr. and Mrs. Richard C. Strain of Poughkeepsie.

A wonderful, diverse gift was made by the late Dr. Joseph Davis of Fishkill, New York. Dr. Davis, who died this past winter, had accumulated a collection of plants with ornamental barks, and he wanted it to be maintained and enjoyed by the public. His plants, dug by Arboretum grounds staff in 1976 and 1977, included the lacebark pine (*Pinus bungeana*) by the main entrance to the grounds; an exceptionally rare *Acer triflorum* from Korea, now planted near the Cary Maple; the rare *Parrotia persica* to be found in the parking circle of the Plant Science Building; the collection of paperbark maples (*Acer griseum*) that surrounds the south and east sides of the Plant Science Building, and the many magnificent stewartias (*Stewartia koreana* and *S. pseudocamellia*) that add winter beauty with their blotched, sinuous stems. These latter probably attract more interest from visiting horticulturists and botanists than any other single group of plants.

While trees and shrubs are marvelous, large-specimen additions to the grounds, of equal importance are the many perennial plant donations that grace the buildings and grounds. Few visitors are unmoved in late winter by the cymbidium orchid collection donated by Mrs. Mary Lasker of Amenia. This collection was enlarged this winter by numerous new orchid species and varieties

donated by Mr. Roswell Miller of Millbrook. Mr. Elliot W. Dann of New York City has spearheaded development of our collection of ground covers, especially of day lilies, Siberian irises, and hostas. Mr. Dann has also provided funds for the labeling machine and labeling materials that will soon allow us to make information about these plants available to the public.

Visitors to the Arboretum's greenhouses always find the tropical house of special interest. Most of the house specimens displayed there are the gifts of nurserymen, other botanical gardens, or Arboretum members. A special feature is the cactus collection assembled by the late Mr. Anthony Caceamo of Wappingers Falls. It contains a good representation of the diverse forms found in this fascinating plant family.

The first display garden to be completed was the Fern Glen, sequestered in and surrounding a perched boggy swamp near the Cary Bridge. Development of this collection was initiated by Mr. and Mrs. Edward L. Linde, who wanted to give the community a living memorial to their son, Clayton. Mr. Lincoln Foster of Falls Village, Connecticut donated the limestone cobble that graces the east entrance area, and Mrs. Wayne Hicklin and the late Mr. Wayne Hicklin, along with International Business Machines, Incorporated, provided funds to build the decks and path systems built by members of the Dutchess County Youth Conservation Corps.

The Rhododendron Dell continues to grow through the yearly generosity of the Orange and Dutchess Counties Garden Club. For this lovely garden, the Eberstadt Foundation has provided numerous large rhododendrons, azaleas, and hollies, moved from the former Eberstadt estate on Long Island, now the Target Rock National Wildlife Refuge. Mr. Richard C. Strain of Poughkeepsie has provided the 10,000-gallon water tank and the irrigation system for this display area.

The Gifford Garden will display special collections of perennials, many quite unusual, which are of value for their low maintenance characteristics. Slated for completion in two years, this is our newest display, although one long in preparation. Starting this garden, which will be the most important teaching collection on the grounds, would not have been possible without backing from the Natural Heritage Trust, the Millbrook Garden Club, and private donations from Arboretum Members and friends. We are especially pleased to note our first endowment fund for a portion of this collection, in provision for the Shankman Rose Garden, reported elsewhere in this issue. Equally significant is the recent donation of the Howard Taylor Lilac Collection, one of the finest private lilac collections in the country (also described in this issue).

To all of those who, with me, have watched with joy the development of the grounds and the public areas of the Arboretum during our brief history, and who have helped make it possible, heartfelt thanks! You have made lasting contributions, gifts that will lift the hearts and expand the understanding of visitors for many years to come. You have also started a tradition that we expect will be continued indefinitely to enrich in most generous and valuable ways the holdings of the Cary Arboretum.

## “Improving the Quality of Urban Life” Topic of Symposium

An International Symposium on Urban Horticulture entitled “Improving the Quality of Urban Life with Plants” will be held at the New York Botanical Garden June 21-23.

Co-chaired by Arboretum staff members Dr. David Karnosky, Dr. Thomas Elias and NYBG Vice President of Education John Reed, the symposium will include three sessions presented by environmental experts.

Topics addressed in the sessions will include the Importance of Plants in Urban Environments; Improving Plant Appreciation in Urban Areas; Innovative Design Concepts for Urban Environments; Urban Plant Pests and Other Stresses; and Selecting and Breeding Plants for Urban Areas. Also included in the symposium will be a field trip to several New York City “natural preserves,” including the Arthur Ross Pinetum in Central Park, the NYBG Hemlock Forest, and Paley Park.

Additional information on the symposium can be obtained from Dr. David Karnosky, (914) 677-5343.

## Millbrook Garden Club Continues Support of Gifford Garden

The Millbrook Garden Club, one of the first groups to assist in the development of the Arboretum's Gifford Garden, continued its support of the Garden in late March with a generous contribution earmarked for construction and acquisition of plant materials.

This donation carries on the Millbrook Garden Club's 70-year tradition of contributing time, effort and funds to the Millbrook Community. A contribution by the Club in 1980 helped launch the Gifford Garden project, and subsequent donations have helped progress to continue at a steady pace.

“We are very grateful to these ladies for their generosity and patronage,” said Arboretum Director Dr. Willard Payne. “This garden will be our most important public showcase when it is completed, and the Millbrook Garden Club is making a gift that will bring knowledge and joy to area residents and visitors for many years to come.”



## Davidia involucrata var. vilmoriniana, The Dove Tree

by Robert S. Hebb

Colloquially known as the dove, or handkerchief, tree, the technical name *Davidia* commemorates Abbé Armand David, the French missionary priest and scientist who discovered it near Mupin, western China in 1869. The European world had to wait until 1901 for its initial glimpse of *Davidia* when the renowned plant explorer Ernest Henry Wilson made his first journey to China and sent back seeds, from which 13,000 plants were raised. Wilson spent the rest of his life working for Harvard's Arnold Arboretum, for which, on subsequent expeditions, he introduced literally hundreds of new Chinese plants into cultivation, including, to name a very few, the regal lily, *Lilium regale*, and the fabulous Chinese dogwood, *Cornus kousa*.

The plant that Wilson introduced is the variety *vilmoriniana*, a form somewhat hardier than the species, but at the very northern limit of its climatic tolerance in the mid-Hudson Valley. The reason we do not see more dove trees probably results from the exceptionally long time they take to produce flowers; 15 to 20 years greatly exceeds the limit for near instant gratification most people desire from garden plants. Also, unfortunately, flowering-size dove trees frequently blossom every other year. Having had the very good fortune to live for seven years at the Arnold Arboretum, almost a stone's throw away from one of the best of Wilson's original specimens, I am convinced that the wait (both the initial one and the biennial one) is worthwhile.

The flowers of *Davidia* are borne in dense round, ¾-inch heads on the ends of drooping stalks. It is not, however, the flowers which provide the extraordinary beauty, but the two enormous, pendulous white bracts which surround them. These are of unequal dimensions, one being up to 8 inches in length, the other about half that size. It is rather easy to imagine why the name handkerchief tree has been given, but it is only when one beholds the bracts "fluttering" in the breeze that the more imaginative common name becomes apparent.

Five years ago I visited one of Wilson's original trees in a very beautiful private garden in Sussex, England. As living proof that the English climate can produce true vegetable wonders, the specimen was about 40 feet in height with a nearly similar width to its immense branch system, and with a trunk well over a yard in diameter. Flaunting many more than a thousand "doves" to my astonished gaze, this, truly, was one of the most memorable plants I have seen in any temperate zone garden.

The specimen in our Rhododendron Dell may never match the above description (but who knows?); however, it is now set to perform its biennial act between the middle and the end of May. I have had it planted at the right-hand corner of the large observation deck, a spot easy to find. Please do come and be seduced by the beauty of our new *Davidia*; it is truly one of the most interesting of all trees.

the horticulture staff to ensure its safety.

The logistics of the move were skillfully orchestrated by Arboretum Grounds Superintendent John Bouton, whose experience in tree moving goes back 20 years when he worked for the Davey Tree Company of Kent, Ohio whom Mary Flagler Cary contracted to work on her Millbrook property.

"This is the largest tree moved to the Arboretum grounds since well before Mrs. Cary's death," says horticulturist Robert Hebb; "...as such it is a marvelous example of the skill and hard work of our grounds crew — from Brad Roeller and Joe Blank who spent many hours with pick and shovel carefully excavating the original trenches and shaping the root ball, to John Bouton's mastery of every detail involved in moving such a large specimen, to the excellent support of the 7 crew members who assured its arrival at the Rhododendron Dell without injury to a single branchlet."

The Arboretum's one-acre Rhododendron Dell, located near the entrance to the Plant Science Building on Route 44A, is the result of a five-year project initiated by the Garden Club of Orange and Dutchess Counties. Since 1981, the Club has provided generous financial support enabling the development, now nearly one-third complete.

With the arrival of *Davidia involucrata*, the Rhododendron Dell became a landmark. It is believed to be the only site of a mature, flowering dove tree in the Mid-Hudson Valley area.

### Taylor Lilacs to Bloom at Cary

Continued from page 1

lilies will form a harmonious backdrop to the low maintenance perennial garden we are developing closer to the Gifford House." Mr. Hebb plans to have more of the lilacs moved this autumn and the remainder next year.

The well-known collection dates back to the 1940's when Millbrook resident Mrs. John Moorhead began planting a choice selection of lilacs on her Crescent Road property. When Rosedale Nursery owner Howard Taylor purchased the Moorhead estate in 1951, Mrs. Moorhead encouraged him to continue the lilac plantings, which he readily did, in addition to his nursery landscape design business. The estate thenceforth was known as Rosedale-in-Dutchess, and as the lilac collection matured, it became known as the Lilac Arboretum.

After Howard Taylor's death in 1958, Mrs. Moorhead again encouraged the Taylor family to improve and maintain the lilac collection, and with her guidance it was opened to the public and was dedicated on May 13, 1961 as the Howard Taylor Memorial Lilac Arboretum.

According to Powers Taylor, now owner of Rosedale Nursery, 1,500 to 2,000 people annually visited the Rosedale-in-Dutchess estate to view the extraordinary collection. Over the past several years, however, upkeep



Moving the *Davidia involucrata* or "Dove Tree" from Poughkeepsie to the Arboretum, as orchestrated by John Bouton, Arboretum Grounds Superintendent.

and his own time, as well as the time of his son Bill, for the one-day project.

As depicted here, the tree, with its two-ton root ball, was hoisted onto a flatbed truck, requiring the attention of several members of



# Around the Arboretum:

## Jack Lashway to Exhibit Work

The mixed media artwork of Pleasant Valley resident Jack Lashway opens with a gallery reception Sunday, June 19, 1:30 to 4 p.m. at the Arboretum's Plant Science Building, Route 44A.

A self-taught artist, Mr. Lashway's work focuses on wildlife and plantlife. He has exhibited his work in Dutchess County and in Lake Placid, New York.

Oil paintings, watercolors and ink sketches will be included in the exhibit, which will be on display through August 15.

Visiting hours to the exhibit will be weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Sundays, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

## Visit the Arboretum This Season and Bring a Friend

The Arboretum grounds are open daily, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Upon obtaining a free visitor pass at either the Plant Science Building or the Gifford House Education Center ("Friends of the Arboretum" need not obtain a pass), visitors are welcome to use the picnic facilities located on the Gifford House grounds, visit the Fern Glen and Rhododendrom Dell, walk on the nature trails and drive on the Arboretum's five-mile internal road system. Maps and descriptive information are available where visitor permits are issued.

Guided tours of the Arboretum's greenhouse complex, Route 82, and Plant Science Building, Route 44A, are conducted on Sundays and Wednesday, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

the Arboretum's Plant and Gift Shop is open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, and 1 to 4 p.m. Sundays.

While visiting the Arboretum, please drive only on hard-surfaced roads and park in designated areas. Walk only on marked trails and remember that swimming, pets, fires or collecting plant materials are not allowed on the grounds.

For additional information on visitation, please call (914) 677-5343 during weekday business hours.

## Staff and Volunteer Photographs On Display

An exhibit of photographs taken by Arboretum staff members and volunteers is currently on display at the Plant Science Building, Route 44A.

The selection of black-and-white and color photographs depicting travel, nature scenes, and the interests of the photographers, will be on display through June 6.

Visiting hours to the exhibit are weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Sundays, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

## At a Glance

Note: Additional information on Arboretum courses can be obtained by calling (914) 677-5358.

Through June 6

Staff and volunteer photographs on display at the Plant Science Building. Visiting hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Sundays.

sessions: 9:30-11:30 a.m. and noon to 2 p.m.

June 19

Gallery Reception: Drawings and Paintings by Jack Lashway, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Plant Science Building.

June 24

Day trip: Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, Mass. Tour the original Shaker communities and their gardens. Bus departs Gifford House 7:30 a.m. Call (914) 677-5358 for further information.

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## Taylor Lilacs to Bloom at Cary

*Continued from page 3*

was interrupted, and the collection was closed to the public.

During the autumn of 1982, Mr. Hebb approached the Taylor family concerning the possibility of moving the collection to the Cary Arboretum. They not only approved the donation of the collection, but also generously contributed a fund that will be used for the considerable expenses incurred in transplanting and establishing the specimens.

"Our family is delighted that the lilacs can be moved to the Arboretum," says Powers Taylor. "The collection will be more accessible to the public, and we will be assured that many will see and enjoy it."

The collection is based on cultivars of